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Joint Inspection Unit

Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit, for the consideration of the General Assembly, his comments on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit contained in its report entitled "Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime" (JIU/REP/2010/10).

A. General comments

1. A review of management and administration in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2010. The corresponding report contained a total of 14 recommendations, one of which was addressed to the governing bodies of the Office, one to the General Assembly, and 12 to the Executive Director of the Office.

2. The Office acknowledges the in-depth analysis and valuable recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. It takes the findings seriously and considers them as a basis for a programme of needed improvements in its governance, programmatic, systemic and administrative practices. It accepts all but one of the 12 recommendations addressed to the Executive Director.

3. A detailed plan of action whereby the accepted recommendations will be implemented in various intervals between 2011 and 2014 has been developed and adopted by the Office management. Task forces composed of representatives from each of the four Divisions of the Office have already been established to manage the implementation process. Their work is closely coordinated by the Office of the Executive Director and the Division for Management.

4. The report was also presented to Member States at the respective sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. In addition, presentations and discussions on the recommendations were held with Member States during the recent meetings of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on finance and governance.

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B. Specific recommendations

Recommendation 1

The recommendation, addressed to the Commissions, called for the holding of joint reconvened sessions that would serve as an integrated governing body, tasked with overseeing budgetary and programmatic activities of the Office.

5. The required action has been completed. With the support of the secretariat, the open-ended intergovernmental working group on finance and governance, the extended bureaux of the Commissions and their respective Chairs conducted informal consultations on the matter. The Chairs of the Commissions consulted with all Member States on a draft decision, which was transmitted to the President of the Economic and Social Council. On this basis, the President of the Council submitted a draft decision (E/2011/L.50) to the members, which was adopted as decision 2011/259. Pursuant to this decision, the Commissions will hold joint meetings starting in December 2011.

Recommendation 2

The recommendation called for a consolidated review of all mandates entrusted to the Office, including resources required and allocated, and requested the Executive Director to submit a prioritization document to the Commissions.

6. The Office is currently dealing with the prioritization document in a two-stage process. The first step is the preparation of an updated strategy for the Office for the period 2012-2015, as requested by the two Commissions. Consultations with Member States are being undertaken within the framework of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on finance and governance in that regard. Once the strategy is approved, the second step will be to develop the strategic framework for 2014-2015, which will operationalize the identified priorities with corresponding indicators of achievement and performance measures. The strategic framework is scheduled for presentation to the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the third quarter of 2012.

Recommendation 3

The recommendation, addressed to the General Assembly, called upon the Assembly to ensure that core functions of the Office were funded by regular budget resources, starting in the 2012-2013 biennium, to enable the Office to carry out its mandates in a consistent and sustainable manner.

7. It is understood that the General Assembly may have the chance to address this recommendation within the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

Recommendation 4

The recommendation addressed the physical fragmentation of the funding structure of the Office and recommended that the Executive Director commission a study on the feasibility, benefits and drawbacks of merging the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Fund.

8. A review of existing studies and reports on the consolidation of the two trust funds is currently under way. Completion and subsequent presentation to the open-ended intergovernmental working group on finance and governance and to the Commissions is scheduled for the first quarter of 2012.

Recommendation 5

The recommendation addressed the funding allocation strategy of the Office by suggesting the adoption of a corporate mechanism to oversee its financial situation and to determine overall resource allocation.

9. The Office plans to define practices for setting strategic priorities, assessing funding shortfalls, allocating funds to priorities and developing guidelines on earmarking of resources. Full implementation is targeted for the end of 2012.

Recommendation 6

The recommendation called for the formulation of a fundraising strategy that would enlarge the donor base of the Office.

10. Initial exposure drafts are already being developed; some initial sharing of concepts and ideas has already taken place at the level of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on finance and governance. Rollout of the resulting corporate guidelines and practices is expected by 2012.

Recommendation 7

The recommendation called for a functional review of all the divisions, sections and units of the Office, in order to align them as part of a reconfirmed and prioritized framework for action, as proposed in recommendation 2.

11. A functional review is currently being undertaken parallel to the development of the Office strategy and the strategic framework for 2014-2015. It is anticipated that the results of the review will feed into a restructuring and realignment exercise that will be coterminous with the development of the prioritization document referred to in recommendation 2.

Recommendation 8

The recommendation called for the implementation of an overall coordination mechanism that would enhance the executive direction and management of the Office.

12. The Office has already begun to review the effectiveness of the current practices with the aim of proposing improvements. Full implementation is targeted for the end of 2012.

Recommendation 9

The recommendation called for the Executive Director to present an independent evaluation of thematic and regional programming and to report on its implementation status, impact and lessons learned to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice by the end of 2013.

13. The evaluation of the thematic and regional programming approach will be included in the 2012 workplan of the Independent Evaluation Unit and the results will be presented to the governing bodies in 2013.

Recommendation 10

The recommendation called for consultations with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to review and update the existing memorandum of understanding.

14. An initial meeting between the Executive Director and the UNDP Administrator was held in April 2011, and lines of contact have been established between the Division for Management of the Office and the UNDP Bureau of Management on the working arrangements and services of a new memorandum of understanding. Full implementation is targeted for the end of 2012.

Recommendation 11

The recommendation called for the Executive Director to undertake further measures to improve gender balance at the senior level, including with respect to field representatives.

Recommendation 12

The recommendation called for the establishment of a clear plan of action to broaden the diversity of the Professional workforce and of the pool of consultants, in particular by considering more candidates from developing countries.

15. Recommendations 11 and 12 are being implemented on an ongoing basis. Both are covered in the Executive Director's compact with the Secretary-General. The senior managers of the Office have been reminded of the commitments within the human resources scorecard and are being held accountable through their individual workplans.

Recommendation 13

The recommendation called for the creation of an internal system to monitor the implementation of recommendations made by relevant oversight bodies.

16. The Office is currently exploring the feasibility of expanding the functionality of its existing audit tracking database to enable electronic tracking of the implementation of recommendations issued by oversight bodies. Full implementation is targeted for the middle of 2012.

Recommendation 14

The recommendation called for the Executive Director to place the Secretary of the International Narcotics Control Board directly under his responsibility.

17. The Office does not accept this recommendation. While it fully recognizes the importance of the International Narcotics Control Board and the need to operate in complete coordination with its mandates, the Office maintains that the current reporting lines, whereby the Board reports to the Division for Treaty Affairs, and,

starting in the 2012-2013 biennium, to the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, is effective and does not in any way undermine the importance and effectiveness of the Board. The current reporting line allows the Executive Director to address the Board's strategy-level matters while leaving the operational and tactical aspects to be resolved by the head of the Division concerned.